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ABSTRACT

This report of basic approaches that have worked in successful school desegregation situations contains recommendations of a national conference. The purpose of the conference was to bring together lay and professional school leaders who had experienced desegregation at the school building, school district or state level. At the school building level, recommendations were made in the following areas: (1) developing positive attitudes in parent, community, staff, and students, (2) ways in which to handle discipline problems, and (3) ways to develop educational programs for all students. At the school district level, recommendations were made in the following areas: (1) ways in which to handle discipline problems, (2) ways to develop educational programs for all students, (3) ways to develop understanding and/or acceptance of busing, (4) ways to develop positive media relationships, and (5) ways to develop additional financing. At the state level, recommendations were made in the areas of leadership at the state level, and state level services. At the school building level, the leadership qualities of school principals were noted as being essential to desegregation. It was concluded that leadership is the crucial ingredient of a school district's desegregation effort. The message of this report is that when the giant step of desegregation was taken with a full commitment, resourceful planning and a concern about each child, education for all students was better than before desegregation. (Author/AM)

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Take A Giant Step

Recommendations of a National Conference on Successful Desegregation

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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These are the recommendations of a national conference on successful school desegregation at Denver, Colo., Dec. 2-4, 1976.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together school leaders—both lay and professional—who had experienced desegregation at the school building, school district or state level. Their discussions about ideas that work are meant to encourage leadership in desegregation in communities and states where desegregation has an unfinished agenda.

The conference was sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education and the Council of Chief State School Officers in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators, The Council of the Great City Schools, the National Association of State Boards of Education and the Education Commission of the States. The conference coordinator was the National School Public Relations Association.

Members of the conference planning committee were Wesley Apker, Executive Secretary, and William D. Brown of the National Association of State Boards of Education; Homer O. Elseroad, Director of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Education Commission of the States; Byron W. Hansford, Executive Secretary, and Connie Halter of the Council of Chief State School Officers; Samuel B. Husk, Executive Vice President, The Council of the Great City Schools; and Paul B. Salmon, Executive Director, American Association of School Administrators.

Take A Giant Step

THE CHALLENGE

"I'm saddened when I think of this conference and wonder where all of you were when we needed you..."

The parent who stood before a gathering of leaders from parent groups, school administrators, state boards and state education departments with this lament had been tough before. She had endured threats to her family and personal tragedy as a result of a 10-year struggle to desegregate the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., schools. That community has reached a point, she told the Denver conference on desegregation, "where we can look beyond busing as an issue, to the kinds of educational opportunities we want available to all young people at the end of the bus ride."

In varying degrees, most of the people at the conference came from communities which had reached the same point. For years, desegregation in this country has been a groping, often lonely process faced with different amounts of courage. Some ideas work, others should have never been tried; some standards must be mandated, others may have to evolve; all factions must be heard, and some must be trusted and given authority. Each community is different and must chart its own course, but this national experience with desegregation has produced a foundation for providing equal educational opportunity to all children. There are successful, positive steps that can be taken at the school building, school district and state levels. The purpose of the Denver desegregation conference was to bring together many of those who had taken these steps and find a common core that could be shared with the communities and states now beginning their desegregation efforts.

This is a report of their findings. It is not a panacea--there are none. It is not a research document, but a telling of basic approaches that have worked. Some of the material is very practical; some of it is subjective, based on personal commitments that have stood up against hostility and divisiveness. The underlying themes are: positive leadership by those with the authority to make desegregation work; a full understanding of and commitment to desegregation; personal involvement by parents, students, teachers and community leadership in the entire desegregation process; and a willingness, when necessary, to get tough. As one state board member said, "Desegregation requires the work of people who don't mind being creamed on the front line at times."

The message of this report is that when this "giant step" is taken with a full commitment, resourceful planning and a concern about each child, education for all students can be impressively better than before desegregation.

AT THE SCHOOL BUILDING LEVEL

The leadership qualities of school principals--their ability "to let the creative juices flow" and "to act rather than react"--are essential to desegregation at the school building level. With a strong principal, the other essentials will be easier to obtain--involvement of students, parents, teachers and community members and organizations in the planning, implementing and evaluating of desegregation; opportunities for this involvement to be personal; and communication strategies that reach all families and that can deal with crises.

Developing Positive Parent and Community Attitudes

"Parents need communication from persons who share their own perceptions. Information is not always synonomous with understanding."

- Establish a parent/citizen advisory council. This can be selected by the school but its composition should be decided by community input. These councils must not be "for show only." They should have real work to do at each step of the desegregation process.

- Make full use of parents as volunteers in the schools. Parents' roles must be more than just crisis- or discipline-oriented--their presence in the schools must be "commonplace" to help eliminate the "discontinuity" between home and school.

- Identify the "key communicators" in the school community and make sure they have immediate access to all information, either informally or as members of a dissemination committee. These people may not always be the civic leaders. They are also the barbers, hairdressers, grocery store clerks and firemen--those who can get the word out.

- Appoint an ombudsperson who can serve as a bridge between school officials and the community, and/or establish a telephone "hotline" in the school staffed by volunteers.

- Work for as much person-to-person communication as is possible--e.g., have biracial teams of parents call on each family before school opens; encourage principals and teachers to go out into the community; arrange times and places of parent-teacher conferences and meetings for the convenience of parents who work or live a distance from the school; require parents to pick up report cards at school; and arrange for parents to be picked up by school buses at regular stops, either for volunteer work or for meetings.

- Involve parents in setting curriculum standards and building-level instructional goals. If the goal is improved performance on reading scores, for example, direct parent volunteers toward achieving the goal, by using them as reading and library aides, tutors and as contacts with other families on how to help children at home.

- Make sure your communication channels are always open. Principals should arrange regular, small group meetings with parents; weekly building-level newsletters should contain substantive information about the school program; teams of parents should contact those families who are not participating; and neighborhood channels of communication should be used, e.g., bulletin boards at corner stores and laundromats. Make all communication activities bilingual where necessary.

Developing Positive Staff Attitudes

"The staff should understand the identity of the school. It's like a marriage. You need to eliminate what won't work."

- Provide inservice training for all school staff, including support staff. The training should deal with humanistic concerns and should openly address any fears and misgivings of faculty members. It must be carefully developed, based on the individual needs, and implemented with as much lead time as possible.

- The principal must be a model of positive attitudes and must insist on appropriate behavior from members of the staff. The principal must also be willing to take the necessary steps for removal of a teacher whose negative attitude cannot be changed by training and evaluation.

- The school staff must be well-integrated.

- Involve the staff in all planning for desegregation. They should help assess the instructional and human relations needs of both staff and students, and feel responsible for both implementing and continuously evaluating the desegregation process.

- Encourage a feeling of staff pride in the school. Help them build an awareness of cultural strengths while developing instructional plans. Provide opportunities for staff members to carry the school's goals and programs out into the community.

- Give release time to staff members to visit other desegregating schools to see what works and how it works.

- Provide an atmosphere of openness and fairness so staff members feel "safe" to express fears and concerns. Resolve all problems immediately.

Developing Positive Student Attitudes

- Establish student advisory councils with wide representation from the student population and with meaningful input and responsibilities. Identify and use the leadership abilities of the "informal network" of student leaders--those who may not participate in the formal activities of the school, but who are looked up to by other students.

- Develop a wide range of extracurricular programs (with activity bus transportation provided). Mandate, if necessary, integrated participation in these activities. Prior to desegregation, for example, student representatives from the desegregating schools could agree on ratios for student councils, cheerleaders, etc.

"Reinforce positive experiences of students. Focus on their abilities, not their inabilities."

- Develop written codes of rights and responsibilities, involving both staff and students in writing them. Avoid "silly rules" that could make students become cynical. Begin and end with small group discussions--first to get ideas and then to explain the final code.

- Set as a goal increasing the self-expectations of all students. Involve them on all advisory councils, and give them opportunities for real decision-making in the school.

- Establish an "open door" policy so students feel free to contact the principal, or other administrators, about their concerns and feel confident they will receive answers speedily and from a reliable source.

- Provide a place and personnel for students to have rap sessions with responsible adult leaders--either school staff or community volunteers.

- Establish firm security measures in an unobtrusive manner. Make students aware of whom they can turn to if they need help or feel threatened. Establish a rumor-control center in the building. Have students meet with police and volunteer or community monitors who might be called in during a crisis.

- At the junior high and high school levels, use students to help orient incoming students from feeder schools.

Ways To Handle Discipline Problems

- Establish clearly defined rules and regulations. The student behavior code must be firm, fair and well-known to all students and parents. Students, parents and staff should be involved in drawing up the code.

"You have to have a plan for dealing with students that is in keeping with your values. The most ideal plan is responsible autonomy. Give students parameters that they have helped to develop."

- Create concepts of fairness--actual and perceived--through such techniques as student ombudspersons and contract agreements. Those in charge of discipline should be sensitive to individual student needs. Disruptive students and their parents should be provided with counseling help.

- Establish review panels on two levels. A student hearing panel should involve peers on rule infractions and can often be more of a deterrent to disruptive behavior than adult-imposed discipline. A discipline review board is needed to check data on each teacher's disciplinary actions and to analyze underlying problems.

- Immediately investigate the reasons for a disproportionate number of minority or majority students receiving suspensions. Is there a lack of communication about the rules? Is one teacher particularly strict with certain students? Are teachers anticipating that some students will "behave badly"?

- Consult with outside authorities on ways to deal with major crime and vandalism. Have a security plan for student safety.

Ways To Develop Educational Programs For All Students

"Each school is like an individual. You can't predict what will work."

- Involve the community in goal-setting and in making the curriculum meet both academic and vocational needs.

- Make sure curriculum content and related materials are multiethnic, multiracial and nonsexist.

- Be sure resegregation does not occur within the school building. Help teachers assume responsibility for preventing resegregation and for developing instructional programs to help avoid it.

- Emphasize basic skills instruction and maintain a single standard of excellence in relation to student abilities.

- Individualize instruction to meet each student's needs--providing tutorial help, innovative programs and creative alternatives for those who can't fit into regular classroom structures.

- Communicate academic goals to all parents and keep them informed regularly on students' achievements, new programs and curricula and benchmarks on meeting these goals.

AT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT LEVEL

Successful desegregation means that a community has pulled together. No matter how upset some residents were at the prospect of desegregation, said the Pontiac, Mich., superintendent, "the community still had high aspirations for the education of its children, the will to preserve good schools and a willingness, finally, to give desegregation a chance."

As at the school building level, leadership is the crucial ingredient of a school district's desegregation effort. The superintendent, the school board and community leaders must unite to lead the community toward an acceptance of desegregation, guided by respect for the law and a belief that integration is needed to provide equal and exemplary education for all children in the school district. It isn't easy to reassure parents that their children are safe in a school away from their neighborhood, that there is equitable distribution of resources for all children, and that the levels of expectation and achievement won't be lowered. But it can be done.

Before desegregation began, Pontiac arranged for parents to take the same bus ride, tour the school their children would be attending and meet the teachers and principal. Parents expressed their opinions and had someone listen to them over a central telephone hotline. Those staffing the telephones at the rumor-control center did not go home until all calls were returned and each question was answered. School administrators and board members attended every public meeting where desegregation was discussed. Ministers in Pontiac strongly supported desegregation from their pulpits. The school system provided detailed research reports on the effects of desegregation on each school, geared to answer "the unmet concerns of parents."

Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., after years of divisiveness in the community, mobilized enough leaders within the schools and community to hold to the commitment that "it had to be done and this was the way to do it." The school system recruited, within 48 hours, more than 4,000 volunteers to ride buses, walk through school corridors, tutor children, answer telephones and perform communication activities. School and community leaders appeared on TV to answer questions from citizens; the National Council of Christians and Jews trained high school students to work with junior high students on human relations projects; a student coordinating council wrote positive stories for the local newspaper; biracial teams of clergy walked through desegregated schools; and the parent-teacher association council insisted that building-level PTAs bring black and white parents together.

Those who lead desegregation efforts must expect controversy. "You need gall, chutzpah and raw courage," said one Denver parent. But "stand up to the big cheeses in the community," she said. "Go to the Chamber of Commerce, the bankers and the clergy and say to them, 'join us because, of course, you want a peaceful city--and school system.'"

Ways To Develop Positive Parent and Community Attitudes

"When interested people are encouraged to examine and verbalize inequities in their schools, they get busy finding solutions."

- The school board, superintendent and top administrative team must set the tone. They must convince parents they believe in desegregation. They must make a firm commitment to parental and community involvement, rather than giving it only "lip service" and, in reality, feeling threatened by such intervention onto their turf. Parents and the community must not be used to "rubber stamp" decisions that have been made at the top.

- Establish quick, clear, concise communication channels. School districts must mount a massive communication effort, either through their own communication personnel or through consultation with a professional public relations firm. In addition to handling the media, there must be communication with key community groups and business establishments, from banks and large corporations to gas stations, beauty parlors and neighborhood grocery stores. There must be a rumor-control center where a parent or other member of the community can get either an immediate answer or a quick return call on any question, problem or concern. Such a center should operate 24 hours a day, with recordings during nonworking hours.

- Both districtwide and school task forces must be formed and informed--and must be representative of the community. They should be given specific responsibilities and a timetable and should be dealt with openhandedly and objectively. The individual school task forces or advisory groups must be well coordinated to avoid competing or conflicting agendas.

- Assure both parents and the community that the quality of education will not be compromised by desegregation and that desegregated pupils will be safe in their schools. Sometimes a symbolic effort can be very significant, such as the school superintendent riding or driving buses during the first few days of desegregation.

- Work with and strengthen existing organizations, rather than "reinventing the wheel." Enlist the help of PTAs, church groups, ethnic organizations and community and civic associations.

- Consider using consultants skilled in community analysis to recommend the best ways to offer human relations training for existing community groups.

- Those responsible for schools must anticipate and develop a plan before one is mandated.

Ways To Develop Positive Staff Attitudes

"An integrated staff is evidence that the game is being played straight."

- Mandate and fund inservice training in human relations for all staff--professional and nonprofessional. However, again, the best influence on staff is by example. The school district leadership should firmly develop behavioral goals and objectives with the staff, and central office administrators should be highly visible in the schools during the desegregation process.

- School district policies should require that staffs be desegregated, preferably before student desegregation.

- The school administration must anticipate the problems that will be faced by the staff in dealing with desegregation and should have ready suggested solutions and materials that would be helpful. The central administration should have a human relations staff to coordinate inservice training and to help on individual problems.

- The staff must be involved in selecting and developing multiethnic, multiracial texts and curricula dealing with equality and human relations.

- Before desegregation, work with teacher training institutions to provide special training for those who want to teach in a desegregated environment. Practice teaching should be in integrated schools, rather than an "antiseptic" laboratory class.

- Involve the leadership of the teachers' union in plans for staff desegregation and inservice training.

Ways To Develop Positive Student Attitudes

"There is no benefit from integration more important than giving kids an opportunity to interact. Racial mix doesn't make an automatic difference on student motivation. It's what the teacher does with that mix that is important."

- School district policies must assure that students will be given a major role in helping to carry out desegregation. This involvement must be both in the development of plans and in their implementation.

- Form integrated teams of students to work on problems in desegregating schools. The teams might visit other schools in successfully desegregated school systems to get ideas. They also should be used to help orient students in feeder schools.

- Provide human relations training programs for students with constant follow-up and evaluation to prevent problems from festering.

- School district policies must assure that discipline procedures are fair and equitable to all students and that students are free from intimidation and fear.

- School districts must develop multiracial, multiethnic curricula relating to the achievements of all minority groups to help improve students' attitudes about each other.

- Extracurricular student activities should be carried out with no loss of leadership status. Students should be encouraged to establish structures to assure equal representation on teams, as cheerleaders, publications staff and other leadership roles. For example, student council presidents from schools that are being integrated could serve as copresidents.

- Activity buses to allow students to remain after school must be provided by the school district.

Ways To Handle Discipline Problems

- School districts must have a written, due process student discipline code and must make sure that school building codes conform to it. The code must be administered firmly, but fairly. Steps must be taken to make sure students, staff and parents understand the code. This may mean small group meetings as well as distributing printed material.

"Each kid needs to feel good about himself."

- School districts should have a well-coordinated crisis plan involving law enforcement agencies to be used in case of student or community unrest. The plan should spell out how to legally deal with the problem of "outsiders" on school premises.

- Alternative programs should be developed for disruptive students, emphasizing counseling and behavioral training rather than punishment. Programs in the alternatives should keep students in pace with regular classroom work.

- If a crisis occurs, school districts should have open channels of communication with their students.

Ways To Develop Educational Programs for All Students

- Establish districtwide minimum expectations for all students and design programs, remedial and otherwise, to help each student meet the minimum standards.

- Allow students to move from one school to another to meet their individual needs, as long as this does not upset the racial balances. Alternative programs should result from community demand and planning.

"We have to move beyond desegregation to humanism."

- Be deliberate in planning the curriculum. It should contain goals and means for attaining human relations understanding and an appreciation of society's pluralism. Use programs in the arts and humanities to foster positive integration.

- Work for efforts at the federal level to allow the use of Title I funds to follow desegregated students to their new schools.

Ways To Develop Understanding and/or Acceptance of Busing

"I called the public hypocrites. No one had opposed busing so long as it was to segregate. Sometimes you have to hit them right between the eyes."

- Avoid buzz words such as "forced busing." Call it "pupil reassignment" or "transportation policies."

- Make the busing plan two-way, treating all segments of the student population equitably.

- Emphasize the program advantages of reassigning students--quality education at the end of the ride.

- Make sure that the specifics of the busing program are well known. Arrange for parents and children to ride the buses together on the assigned route before desegregation begins. Hold open houses at the new schools at the end of the bus ride.

- Emphasize safety precautions--and let the community know that this is a strong policy. Train bus drivers to handle discipline problems, but also establish training and behavior codes for students. Let parents know what the standards are. Use bus stop monitors, if necessary, for safety and to help students develop self-discipline for the bus ride.

- Hold open hearings on bus routes so that parents can have some involvement in the busing plan.

- Set reasonable time limits on the length of bus rides and try to keep drivers on the same routes.

Ways To Develop Positive Media Relationships

- Media relations must be a year-round effort, coordinated at the district level by a professional communications specialist, preferably on the school district staff. School districts--the administrative staff and the school board--must be open and honest with the media at all times. Good media support during a crisis depends on credibility and respect earned over a long period of time.

- As much as possible, media relations should be on a person-to-person basis, rather than through just news releases and memos. During crucial periods of desegregation, have a spokesperson who is adept at being interviewed, but who also has the authority to represent the school system. There must be unanimity by the school board and administrative staff in public comments on desegregation.

"Tell the truth. The rumors are much worse."

- Respect the professionalism of the media, and ask for the same. Don't shade the truth--but don't be reluctant to constructively criticize media coverage if it is erroneous or inflammatory.

- Involve the media in desegregation plans. Meet regularly with editors and management and give them roles in developing the plan. Ask their cooperation in developing informational public service programming that will put desegregation in a proper perspective.

- Plan a media campaign that will balance the attention given to desegregation. Prepare information for the media on numerous other educational programs in the school system--to convey the theme that education of all children is still the purpose of the schools.

- Explore the use of all types of media coverage--e.g., community newspapers, cable TV systems. Representative student contributions to local newspaper and TV programs can give a community an expanded perspective of what is happening inside schools. Communications should be multilingual, where necessary.

- Develop and distribute media guidelines to all schools and staff. These should cover crisis plans--how the central office communications staff will be involved with individual schools if problems develop.

Ways To Develop Additional Financing

"We should reexamine the entire concept of school financing. We should tie specific amounts to specific goals—with $5 million we can do this, with $4 million we can do this much. . . ."

- Anticipate what the desegregation costs will be. Work up a detailed budget, making it clear what each part of desegregaton will cost and where the money will have to come from. However, it is important to distinguish the actual additional costs (e.g., transportation) from those costs that will improve programs for all students (e.g., inservice training, improved instructional materials).

- Work with school and community groups to show the educational benefits and improved services that will come from the additional expenditures.

- Look to local funding resources first--even short-term loans for such items as additional buses. Push for more funding at the state or federal levels and for changes in federal laws that would open the way for more imaginative funding of mandated desegregation.

- Make sure that funds are distributed to desegregated schools on an equitable basis. Accept the fact that some desegregated schools will need more money and services than others in order to provide an equitable educational program.

AT THE STATE LEVEL

"What would have happened if the courts, from the beginning of school desegregation in this country, had told all the states, 'This is your baby'"?

The question, by the state education commissioner for New Jersey, implies that much time was wasted or misspent in the years when most states were allowed to step back from a leadership role in desegregation. They no longer have that choice, either because of court orders, legislative mandates or necessity. Some states have experienced three stages in the desegregation process, as described by one state leader: an era of benign neglect, when whatever action taken was dominated by the rural interests in both the legislature and the state department of education; an era of progress; and now a period of frustration, when those school districts remaining to be desegregated have hard core problems--either predominantly minority populations or peculiarly arranged with no support for desegregation. At whatever point state interests now are, peaceful desegregation again depends on one compelling need--strong, gutsy leadership.

Concern and commitment by the governor, leaders in the state assembly and the state superintendent helped North Carolina become one of the first states to attack segregation statewide. Despite a divided state board, the superintendent--a newly elected official--obtained federal funds in 1969 to establish a technical assistance staff for desegregation. Up until that time, delay tactics were more commonplace than genuine efforts for desegregation. The superintendent's tactic--"We told our school districts that 'Here we are, and one way or another, we are going to eliminate segregation in this state.'" The assembly adopted an Equal Educational Opportunity Act; the governor placed his children in integrated schools. The state education department's technical assistance staff, organized as the Division of Human Relations, began a "handholding" process with workshops, inservice training, crisis treatment and human relations services. The emphasis was not just to advise, "but also to challenge." Materials were developed for use in the workshops and during inservice training, and the division also made its impact felt in curriculum planning and other state department services. The state agency set an example for school districts--half of the six assistant superintendent positions are now filled by minorities. State leaders pushed for and received approval of a $300 million bond issue for new school construction, making it possible for many school systems to eliminate "bad environments" and begin desegregation in new facilities. Desegregation doesn't happen all by itself, the superintendent advises. "It must be constantly guided and pushed. But it also must promise realistically to achieve some worthwhile goal." All school districts in the state except one now conform to federal desegregation guidelines.

The uniquely difficult problems of desegregation in the North and West need that same crucial ingredient--quality leadership. The newly formed state board in Illinois, unanimously committed to desegregation, had one advantage: "We didn't realize that it couldn't be done." Although legislation requiring quality integration had been on the books in Illinois for several years, it did not become an impor-

tant policy matter until the new state board established desegregation guidelines to conform to the law in 1975. The attitude at the state level, again, was unequivocal--"We have the authority. Integration must be done and we will do everything we can to help you." In one year's time, the state board received 23 acceptable desegregation plans and placed eight school districts on probation, including Chicago. According to the chairperson of the state board's equal educational opportunity committee, there are two important guidelines for state boards in dealing with desegregation--set the policies, then give the staff responsibility and opportunity for leadership on following through; and correlate state and federal activities.

But the most important role of the state does not have much precedent. It's the uncharted course of deciding where to go once desegregation has begun. The Michigan superintendent believes that state leadership must ask: "What should we be doing differently from what we did in de jure and de facto desegregation; how should we motivate the remaining school districts to get on the ball; and what are the new ideas emerging from integration and how do we relate them to student achievement?" In addition, there are major decisions each state faces without the benefit of much hindsight by any other state--the need and resources for meeting demands for additional funds from desegregating school systems; the challenge of preventing resegregation; the search for metropolitanwide solutions where needed; and the role of state leaders in changing segregated housing patterns to prevent the decline of cities and their school systems.

One Northern state commissioner gives a pessimistic warning: "Integration seems increasingly inadequate...We're too frightened to look at the long-range implications of desegregation." But a Southern leader replies: "Progress comes from failure, not success. Because when you succeed, you tend to repeat yourself. Desegregation has to keep on being done. It is never finished."

Leadership at the State Level

"If it needs to be done, go ahead and do it and let someone else say it can't be done."

- Governors, legislators and state education agencies must work in concert to provide the legal, administrative and financial framework for statewide integration. Their support of desegregation must be unequivocal.

- The state education agency and other state leaders must provide the model. For example, personnel policies should exemplify what is being required in local school districts.

- State boards and state education agencies should bring the various groups involved in desegregation together at the state level, e.g. teacher and adminstrator organizations and parent groups. This will help serve as a model for the local level.

- State leadership should mediate conflicts between local and federal levels--not trying to compromise constitutional requirements, but making sure they are carried out with respect for state responsibilities and local concerns.

- The state level should link successful desegregation efforts. School districts within the state should share their approaches to problems; desegregation plans outside of a state which may be relevant should be disseminated to local districts within a state.

State Level Services

- Quality technical assistance of all kinds should be made readily available to all school districts needing it. Staff should be available to help with desegregation planning and evaluation, and to advise on applications for federal grants. It should propose administrative and instructional procedures to help local school districts cope with desegregation.

"The Chinese symbol for crisis means 'dangerous opportunity.' "

- A human relations component must be emphasized at the state level--through staffing, training and materials--in order to encourage this as part of local school district desegregation. Programs should be developed to help communities obtain support for school desegregation.

- Research capacities should be built into desegregation assistance. Not only can the state education department serve as a clearinghouse for current research on desegregation; it can also provide statistics and plan and conduct research for local school districts to determine if the policies and programs are accomplishing their goals. Such research can also help state agencies decide what should be done if the goals are not being met.

- The philosophy of integration should permeate all services of the state agency--in its staffing and the materials it produces for local school districts. An objective should be the coordination of all educational services--from day care to adult education--with the goal of better human relations.

- The state department must be prepared to provide assistance in dealing with crisis situations.

- The state department should make available outside consultative services to those districts which need specialized help.

THE CHALLENGE AGAIN

"There is no one, simple answer to desegregation. Those responsible for initiating a desegregation plan must develop one that works for them. Therefore, this report's purpose is not to answer specific questions, but to show the way....

You must begin with a symbol of fairness in someone who is in a position of power and who understands the problem. Give authority to plan to a person--school board member, superintendent, assistant superintendent--in whom people can have faith.

Then you must listen, even though you've heard it all before. A lot of school systems have a built-in way to punish those who bring bad news. And a lot of school boards act as if they have heard it before, but you need to hear people's concerns again and again. This takes patience, but it is crucial.

Recognize that difference is not a deficiency. Do not set up standards that might be biased. We thought that desegregation was going to make everyone just alike, but that didn't work--and it shouldn't have.

Expect people to be vocal, though they may lack information and understanding. Give them a chance to 'ventilate' even though they may be wrong.

Understand the cycle of change and manage it. The advent of change is when you must deal with people who are opposed to it and people who think everything must be changed. In the second stage, people express their concerns; then, there are requests for information. The requests have their own rationale, and this leads to confrontation. Next comes polarization and, out of that, conflict. This produces an 'instant honesty,' when you are faced with failure, but this is the point at which change can begin. It also is where you started in the cycle--wouldn't it be better to deal with change before it occurs?

Involve citizens to the extent that their perspectives and perceptions are changed. This involves training--to reach beyond feelings to experience. People must internalize what the problems are.

You can go a long way with a smile and a plan for dealing with people. Plan for managing public meetings with agreement on the parameters--that what you discuss is legal, is educationally feasible and is mutually acceptable. Plan for two-way communication--work from the attitude that 'it is my responsibility for you to know what I want you to know.' Use pipelines already in existence. Plan for dealing with adversaries--expect people to oppose what you are doing. If you anticipate this, you won't be incapacitated by opposition or respond in a way that heightens the problem. Plan for coping with the unexpected. And plan on using everyone's natural abilities effectively rather than trying to change them to your liking.

Work on your own attitude daily. Don't expect someone else to make all the sacrifices. You can't be part of the desegregation process if you have only a half-way commitment. Keep in mind that if desegregation is fully effective, all children will have a chance to learn up to their full potentials.

Always deal with what is right, not who is right.

From the conference summary presented by Dudley E. Flood, Assistant State Superintendent for Human Relations and Student Affairs, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

"listen.
please
listen to me.
it's not so much,
but i feel it.

sometimes
i want to say things,
but i can't
or i shouldn't . . .
i don't know.
please
help the words get out.

sometimes
i want to
laugh
and sing
and be crazy.
maybe
we could be crazy
together
sometime.

sometimes
i feel
so sad
i don't want to see you
or anybody.
i wish
you could make it go
away.

sometimes i get
mad,
and you get
mad,
and i want
to get away
from you,
or smash you
or put you somewhere
where you can't
hurt me.
i don't want to get
mad,
but you make me
sometimes.

sometimes
i have things
on my
mind,
big things
—you know—
and i don't
see you
or hear you
or even
care about you
very much.

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sometimes i'm afraid
of what you think,
or sounding dumb,
of doing bad.
don't think i'll lose. . . .
please?
i don't want to
fail.
please,
it's cold out here.

i see you
and hear you
and even touch you
sometimes,
but i don't know you.
talk to me.
i'll share me if
you'll share you.
what do you say
when your friends are around?
do you laugh?
do you cry?
do you talk about me?

hold me.
help me.
heal me.
like me. . . .
please,
like me."

By Stewart Rogers
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"Plans don't work. People do."

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